

## Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request 4

**Date of Meeting:** February 8, 2005

**Date Submitted:** February 2, 2005

**To:** Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board  
**From:** Parwez Alam, County Administrator  
Vincent Long, Assistant County Administrator  
Wayne Tedder, Planning Director  
**Subject:** Acceptance of the Lake Bradford Sector Workplan.

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### **Statement of Issue:**

This agenda item requests Board acceptance of the Lake Bradford Sector Workplan (Attachment #1).

### **Background:**

Both the City and County Commissions directed planning staff to pursue sector planning within the community. Sector planning has also been recommended in the *Blueprint 2000* report and is mandated by the Southern Strategy policies in the Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, Future Land Use Policy 11.2.2 directs that sector plans be prepared for the Southern Strategy area.

Sector planning is becoming common in Florida and the nation as a tool to help cities and regions to address growth and development issues. Sectors vary but each provides an opportunity for communities to consider basic issues determining how a community should mature. A collaborative process is used to bring various stakeholders to the table to develop an accurate picture of the area's future.

Citizens have requested sector planning in Tallahassee. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Council recommended the use of sector planning in their 1995 study on transportation and land use planning. The *Blueprint 2000* effort recommended sector planning to address issues holistically such as watershed, transportation and land use planning. The Gaines Street Revitalization project is an example of a successful sector planning process. The County has also completed the Bradfordville Sector Plan to address growth concerns.

Sector planning focuses on a manageable area and considers the land use, transportation, environmental, and infrastructure needs unique to that portion of the community. This level of planning moves from the generalities of a comprehensive planning process that target the entire community. The pitfalls of single issue or narrow scope planning of individual parcels are avoided. Establishing a vision for each sector provides a basis for consistent decision-making and therefore more certainty and stability to all stakeholders.

For the Lake Bradford project, sector planning involves planning staff working directly with residents, property owners and stakeholders in the target area to determine unique characteristics of that area. Specific solutions to problems are then crafted through the planning process, creating a viable, energetic community. The Lake Bradford sector plan is a critical component of the Southern Strategy, as it will help shape the future redevelopment of Leon County's south side over the next 20 years and beyond.

### **Lake Bradford Sector Meetings**

The Lake Bradford area provides unique resources for the Leon County community. The Chain of Lakes provides a natural amenity and vital wildlife habitat in close proximity to the Downtown and Universities. Recreational and cultural resources include the Florida State Reservation and Golf Course and the Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science. Finally, the Tallahassee Regional Airport provides a critical transportation link for the growth of business and industry for the City and County, with Innovation Park being a key component to such development. A general location map for the Lake Bradford Sector is included as Attachment #2.

On April 29, 2004, the first community workshop was held to determine the community's vision for the sector. More than 60 people, representing business and property owners, students, government officials, investors, residents, and interested citizens, attended the meeting. The following five priorities were suggested for this project:

1. Protect Lake Bradford and the Chain of Lakes.
2. Restore Lands Impacted by landfills/sand mines.
3. Develop a balanced, future land use pattern.
4. Provide a functioning transportation system that does not degrade the environment or the quality of life.
5. Address crime and blight areas.

Between April and September, Planning Department staff conducted three priority issue meetings where staff worked with stakeholders to develop strategies for each priority. The meetings were well attended and there was a good amount of public input.

On September 30, 2004, the Planning Department hosted the second community workshop. At this meeting, the community was presented with the strategies developed. Public comments were received and changes were made based upon those comments. On November 3, 2004, the third and final Community Workshop was held and the Lake Bradford Sector Plan and Implementation Plan were presented. The Schedule of Public Participation (information on public meetings for the Lake Bradford Sector Plan) is provided in Attachment #3.

On January 12, 2005, the Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Commission unanimously recommended approval of the Lake Bradford Sector Workplan.

## Summary of the Lake Bradford Sector Plan

The Lake Bradford Sector Plan recommends protecting Lake Bradford and the Chain of Lakes and the surrounding neighborhoods from incompatible development. The participants understood that growth is inevitable but they stressed that future development should not reduce the quality of life in the sector. The Plan also considers important economic development issues facing the sector including the public lands currently owned by Florida State University, the re-routing of Capital Circle and the importance of the Tallahassee Regional Airport and Innovation Park.

The sector plan focuses on the following areas:

- Protecting Lake Bradford and the Chain of Lakes by:
  - o extending sewer lines to areas adjacent to the lakes to minimize the impact of septic tanks
  - o restoring Black Swamp and Grassy Lake
  - o pursuing the acquisition of properties to create a buffer zone around Lake Bradford
  - o maintaining low-density residential adjacent to the lake.
- Restoration of lands impacted by landfills and sandmines in the sector
- Protecting the quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods by minimizing land use densities and cut-through traffic
- Accommodating future growth and development by directing new growth to areas most suitable in the sector
- Identifying acceptable land use activities for large vacant tracts
- Potential scenarios for Capital Circle Southwest and the benefits and impacts of each scenario

### Analysis:

The Lake Bradford Sector Workplan addresses each of the priority issues identified by the Lake Bradford community and includes more than 20 strategies for pursuing the vision of the Lake Bradford area. Many different options or the positives/negatives, such as the Capital Circle widening and the north-south street, are presented.

The strategies vary in impact - from continuing to monitor the Lakes - to building a new north/south street. Some of the major strategies identified are:

- Extend Sewer Lines adjacent to Lake Bradford and the Chain of Lakes  
The most important issue for the residents is the protection of Lake Bradford and the Chain of Lakes. Staff found a high concentration of septic tanks adjacent to Lake Bradford and Cascade Lake. Staff informed residents of the average costs of sewer connection, according to City of Tallahassee utilities. Overall, residents responded favorably to the strategy, but expressed concerns regarding possible impacts to trees and vegetation, and the costs to residents to extend the sewer lines.

- Promote Acquisition of Properties surrounding Lake Bradford and the Chain of Lakes and maintain low-density development adjacent to the lakes  
Residents identified the need to keep low-density development adjacent to the lakes. For Lake Bradford, staff identified that most of the Lake is already protected through either low-density zoning or publicly owned lands. The exception is along the northern edge of the lake, where property has higher development potential. The plan recommends purchasing properties, in this area, for public use and protection of the lakes, over time. In the interim, the plan recommends no further development intensities be granted in this area.
  
- Restoration of Lands Impacted by Sandmines and Landfills  
Residents expressed concern with the level of industrial activity that has occurred north of Orange Avenue, such as sand mines and construction debris landfills. The plan recommends that these lands be restored and the debris removed from the properties. In addition, the plan calls for the rezoning of these properties from M-1 Industrial to a zoning more consistent with the future development of these properties.
  
- Plan for Future Development North of Orange Avenue -  
Planning Department staff analyzed the vacant lands north of Orange Avenue, identifying land most suitable for future development. Staff found many of these lands limited, either through environmental constraints (mostly floodplains or wetlands), or by the Lake Bradford Development Zone protections. The remaining properties should be planned for future development.
  
- Capital Circle Southwest  
From the beginning of the Lake Bradford Sector Plan, residents expressed concerns regarding Capital Circle Southwest. Residents had concerns with both the existing alignment and the realignment identified in Blueprint 2000. Staff from Blueprint 2000 and the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency worked with Planning staff to inform residents of the Capital Circle widening project and the need for improvements. Residents and staff discussed options that would add capacity, and the pros and cons of each option. In the implementation plan is a map series identifying the options created and the pros and cons of each option. Blueprint 2000 will supply the consultant with this map series when the transportation study (PD&E) begins for this segment.
  
- New North-South Street  
Residents of Seminole Manor and Mabry Manor expressed concerns with the level of cut-through traffic that currently exists. Residents also expressed concerns regarding the potential development of Florida State University's property as intramural fields. With the prospect of additional development on the vacant lands to the south of these neighborhoods, residents identified a new north-south road as an option to relieve the cut-through traffic in the neighborhood.

Residents did not agree on a specific corridor, or on whether construction of a new road is the best option. Instead, residents analyzed the pros and cons of this strategy. Some residents were concerned about the general location of the road identified on the map because of environmental impacts or proximity to neighborhoods. The Lake Bradford neighborhood does not want the road to create a direct connection to their neighborhood streets, increasing cut-through traffic. Finally, residents identified problems in crossing the railroad tracks north of Roberts Avenue. All crossings are at grade, and CSX has a switching yard in the area that causes trains to block all north-south access, especially in the morning. This creates major transportation problems for the residents. Without a solution to this problem, additional development would exacerbate the bottleneck.

Lake Bradford and South Monroe have been completed. Oak Ridge and Capital Cascade are near completion. West Pensacola will begin in February 2005. Staff is requesting conceptual approval of the Lake Bradford Workplan as a guide for improving the sector. If approved by the Board, staff will analyze the recommendations based upon their feasibility for implementation.

The list of strategies and their descriptions can be found in the Lake Bradford Sector Workplan.

**Options:**

1. Accept the Lake Bradford Sector Workplan.
2. Do not accept the Lake Bradford Sector Workplan.
3. Board direction.

**Recommendation:**

Option #1.

**Attachments:**

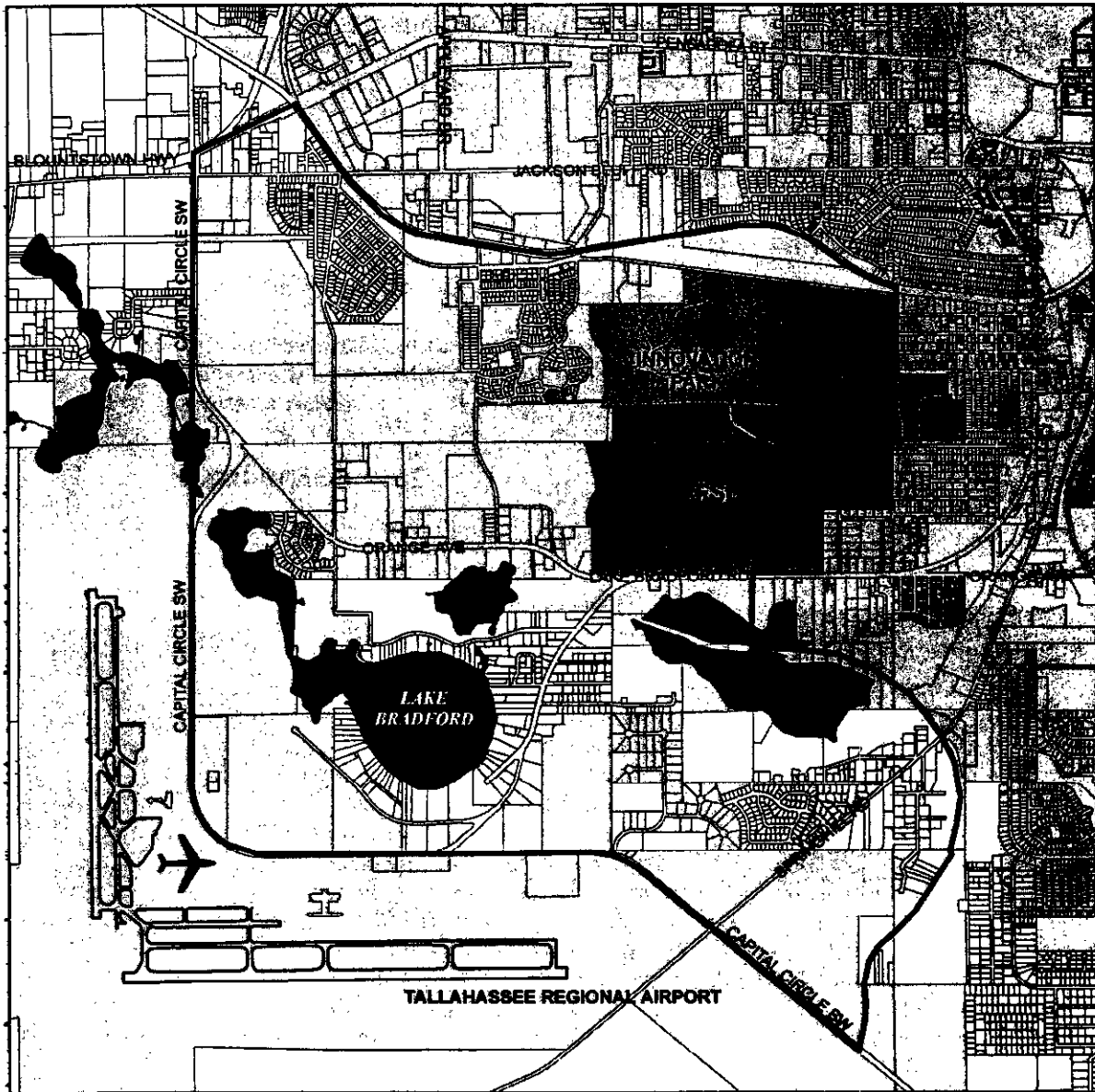
1. Lake Bradford Sector Workplan
2. Map of Lake Bradford Sector
3. Public Meeting Schedule










Lake Bradford Sector Workplan

# LAKE BRADFORD SECTOR STUDY AREA



-  SECTOR BOUNDARY
-  FSU PROPERTY
-  INNOVATION PARK
-  LAKES
-  TALLAHASSEE REGIONAL AIRPORT

## Lake Bradford Sector Workplan

# Priority Issue 1 – Protect Lake Bradford and the Chain of Lakes

## Issue Statement

The participants in the Lake Bradford Sector Community Workshop identified as their top priority the protection of Lake Bradford and the Chain of Lakes. The citizens were concerned about the long-term health of this community asset. The concerns expressed centered upon the following issues:

1. Maintain Good Water Quality
2. Buffer Lake Bradford
3. Utilize the Golden Aster Site

Staff worked with the community to develop strategies for each of these concerns as identified below.

## Strategies

### A. To maintain good water quality:

- i. Continue monitoring the Chain of Lakes by both the City of Tallahassee and Leon County, and the volunteer efforts led by the group Florida Lakewatch.  
Action: No new action is needed. This an ongoing function by both the City of Tallahassee and Leon County to monitor lakes.
- ii. Extend sewer lines, thereby discontinuing the use of septic systems in areas adjacent to the Chain of Lakes.  
Action: This can be addressed through either Leon County's assessment process or annexation by the City of Tallahassee. However, both of these options require the approval of a majority of the property owners.
- iii. Install a gate to prevent backflow from Grassy Lake to Lake Bradford, which can lead to contamination and eutrophication and large algal blooms. A detailed engineering report is necessary to decide the feasibility and overall effectiveness of such a project.  
Action: This will require coordination with Leon County Public Works to identify the best option to prevent backflow into Lake Bradford.
- iv. Pursue the restoration of the Black Swamp and Grassy Lake.  
Action: This will require coordination with Leon County and the City of Tallahassee to identify the potential for scheduling the restoration of these areas.





## Lake Bradford Sector Workplan



### B. To create a Lake Bradford Buffer zone:

- i. Maintain the current low-density residential development pattern in the areas closest to the Chain of Lakes.  
Action: No action needed.
- ii. Promote the acquisition of lands with environmental features north of Lakeview Drive. Pursue federal, state and local funding.  
Action: Identify lands recommended for acquisition and consider them for purchase as state and federal funding becomes available.
- iii. Recommend those lands north of Lakeview Drive maintain the current uses or rezone to a more compatible residential designation.  
Action: Monitor the lands north of Lakeview Drive and ensure that for these properties the status quo is maintained, unless an opportunity arises to purchase the property or rezone for single family residential use.

### C. Utilize the Golden Aster site:

- i. Preserve the property in its present forested state for use as a low intensity, passive park. This will also further the goal of creating a natural vegetative lake buffer.
- ii. Extend greenway through the property in route to the Capital Cascades and St. Marks Trails. Designate a portion of the site as a "Limited Facility Development" permitting trails, signage and limited parking.
- iii. Promote the development of interpretive environmental education trails by the Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science.



## Lake Bradford Sector Workplan

### Priority Issue 2 – Restore lands impacted by Landfills/Sandmines

**Issue Statement:** In the community workshop, the public identified concerns about the mining activities that had occurred north of Orange Avenue. The public's concerns were centered upon the environmental impacts to the area and the re-use of those lands. The public requested more information regarding the required restoration activities and the opportunities being considered for the properties.

#### Strategies

- A. Continue to encourage the restoration of sites for future redevelopment opportunities.  
Action: For facilities owned and managed by the City of Tallahassee and Leon County, the recommendation is for the restoration of these facilities and working with the public to determine the best future use of these lands. For private facilities, it is for the City and County to encourage restoration. Potential future uses of landfills/sandmines include stormwater management, park/recreation and low intensity development.
- B. Rezone properties to permit land use activities more compatible with the area. Redesignating these lands for higher quality uses may incentivize the restoration of these lands.  
Action: Direct the Planning Department to rezone lands designated M-1, as appropriate, to a zoning category consistent with the desired future land use pattern for the area. M-1 permits unwanted land uses in this area.
- C. Re-zone publicly owned facilities before they are restored to encourage the redevelopment of these facilities.  
Action: Direct the Planning Department to rezone the publicly owned facilities before they are restored to encourage redevelopment of these lands.



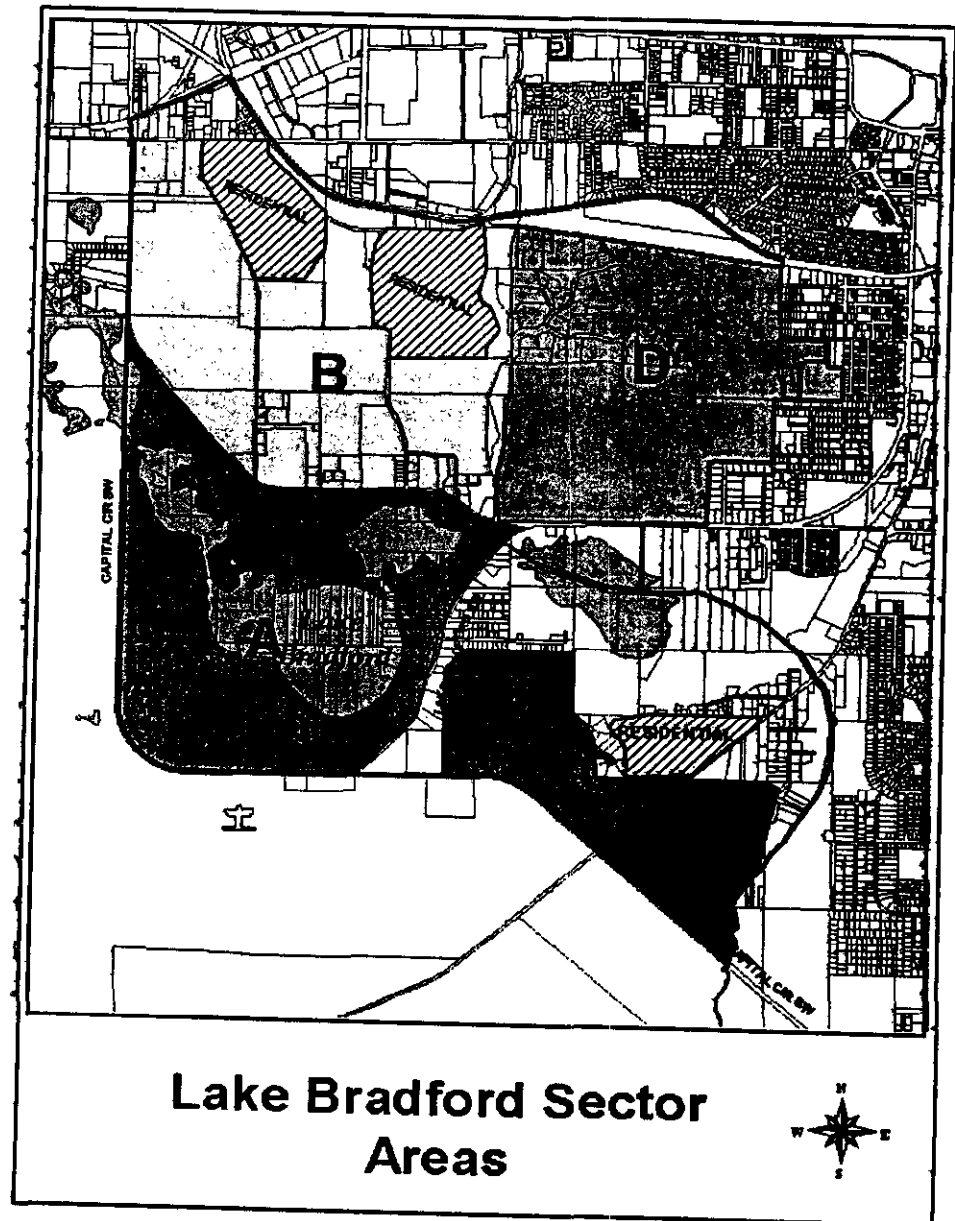
# **Lake Bradford Sector Workplan**

## **Priority Issue 3 – Develop a Balanced Future Land Use Pattern**

**Issue Statement:** In the public workshops, the community essentially divided the sector into four sub-sections (see attached map). Those sub-sections are:

- A. Chain of Lakes Buffer Area
- B. Orange Avenue North
- C. Southeast Business Development
- D. FSU/Innovation Park

The community also identified a land use strategy for each of these subdistricts. In the section below, each area is defined.



## Strategies

### Lake Bradford Sector Workplan

**Area A** – This area is recommended as a buffer to protect the water quality for Lake Bradford and the Chain of Lakes. The recommended future uses for this area are limited to 1) natural/open space with trails, 2) low density residential and 3) expansion of the Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science.

Action: Direct the Planning Department to rezone properties to low density residential if supported by the property owner. Look for opportunities to acquire lands north of Lakeview Drive to complete the buffer zone around Lake Bradford. Finally, encourage the expansion of the Tallahassee Museum onto adjacent lands owned by Dick Wilson.

**Area B** – This area is recommended for various uses ranging from university/research activities to housing and parks. The community recommends that university housing be limited to married student housing similar to Alumni Village. The community also recommends that new development be buffered from existing residential areas, not increase cut-through traffic in existing neighborhoods and not degrade the quality of the chain of lakes.

The community also recommends that any new development carefully consider the connections with the chain of lakes including potential for sinkhole development. The restoration of sandmines should consider the type of reuse and where appropriate to use these facilities for stormwater, park/recreation uses or low intensity development.

The community also identified a need for a community center providing a focus for this sector, which could provide civic, commercial and employment opportunities.

Action: Direct the Planning Department to rezone lands zoned M-1 to zoning categories consistent with the recommended future land use pattern. Identify potential areas for a community center to provide a focal point for the sector. Finally, restore properties impacted by sandmine uses. In addition, coordinate with Florida State University with the development of the Southwest Campus to ensure that development is consistent with the community directives in the sector plan.

**Area C** – The community identified more intense commercial development for this area, likely containing uses linked to the Tallahassee Regional Airport. The area utilizes connections to Interstate 10 via Capital Circle Southwest and the downtown via Springhill Road. Development of this area may be limited by environmental and height constraints.

Action: Direct the Tallahassee Regional Airport staff to consider the comments for Area C for any future development plans for lands designated in this area.

**Area D** – The community identified Area D for family-student housing or executive housing for the university and Innovation Park. The housing component was considered practical if the golf course was redesigned in order to provide home sites.

Action: Coordinate with Florida State University to ensure that they are aware of the public comments received for the use of their lands.

**Lake  
Bradford  
Sector  
Workplan**

**Priority Issue 4 – Provide a Functioning Transportation System that does not degrade the environment or the quality of life**

Issue Statement: Participants recommended that the following transportation issues be considered for the Lake Bradford Sector:

1. The realignment of Capital Circle
2. Springhill Road as a gateway
3. Creation of a new north-south street to relieve neighborhood cut-through traffic

**Strategy**

Realignment of Capital Circle – The community identified four options for the realignment. Those options are 1) keep existing alignment, 2) Blueprint Alignment, 3) Combination Alignment and 4) New Capital Circle. The community identified the pros and cons for each option (see attached maps identifying each alignment).

Action: Provide to the consultant for the Capital Circle Southwest PD&E study the results of the community's discussions for improving Capital Circle. Ensure that the consultant uses this map series as part of the determination for identifying the best alternative for Capital Circle Southwest.

Gateway for Springhill Road  
- The community supports the efforts to renovate Springhill Road as a gateway from the airport to downtown. Any road improvements should also consider the land use pattern along Springhill and make recommendations

Create a new north-south road – The community identified the need to reduce neighborhood cut-through traffic. A new north-south option was presented to minimize the impacts of traffic in existing neighborhoods and provide a means for accommodating additional development demands in the sector. The community considered various options and the pros and cons of each option (see attached map showing the options considered).



Action: Coordinate with the City of Tallahassee and Leon County on this community recommendation. In addition, consider this roadway when reviewing the Southwest Campus proposal from Florida State University

## Priority Issue 5 – Address crime and blight areas

### Lake Bradford Sector Workplan

**Issue Statement:** The community identified concerns with crime near convenience stores in the sector and blight concerns in neighborhoods and roadside businesses. To address these issues the community identified the following potential solutions:

- Reduce criminal activity in the sector especially around convenience stores and the edge of Seminole Manor through increased patrols.
- Eliminate the perception of a degraded area by infrastructure improvements such as better lighting and landscaping.
- Address the clean up of abandoned lands and blighted businesses and housing areas.

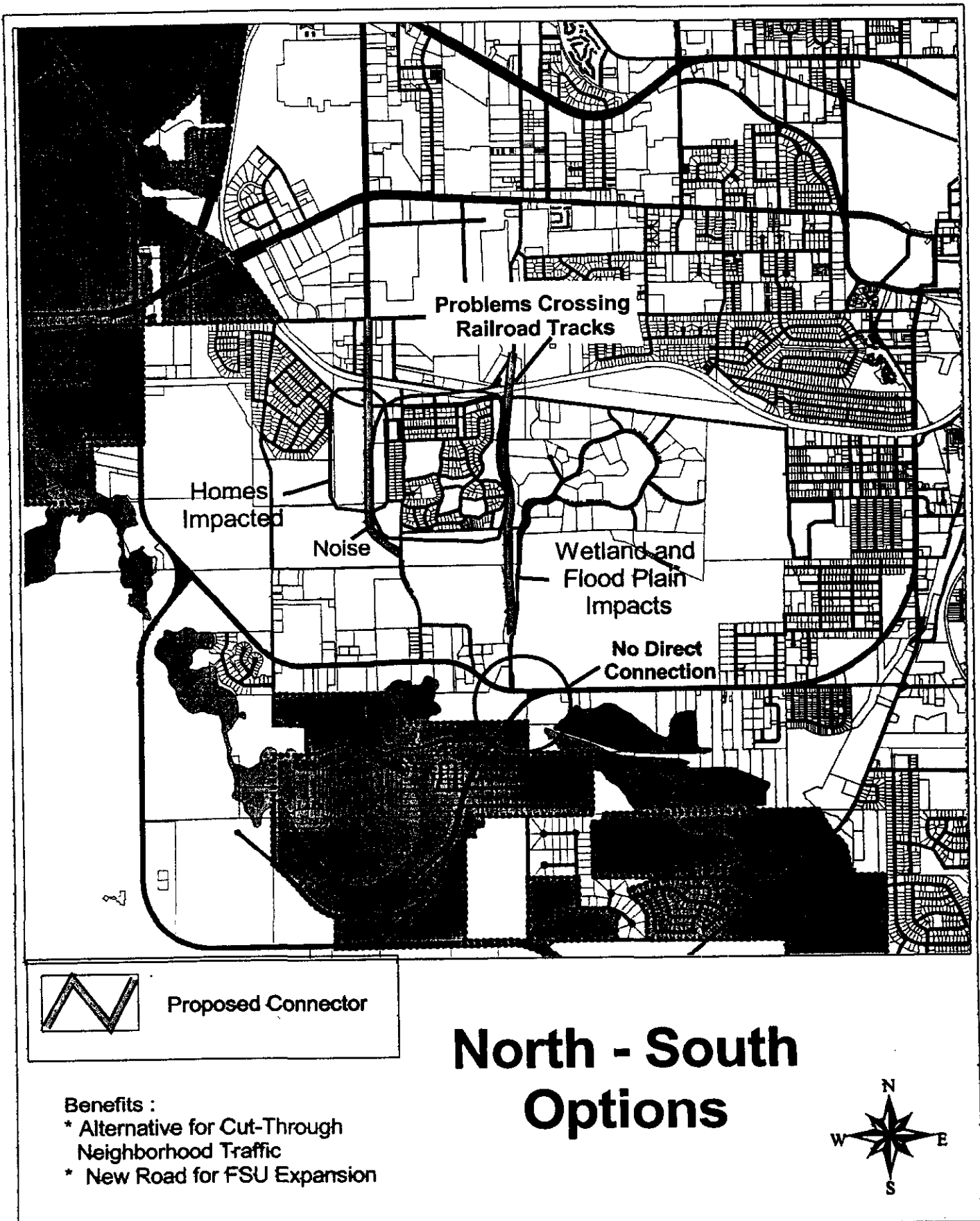
Based upon this direction, Planning Department staff talked with representatives from Leon County Code Enforcement and Sheriff's Office and the City of Tallahassee Departments of Neighborhood and Community Services and Police Department. From these discussions staff learned that these Departments have either been addressing issues in the sector or are not aware of problems in the area. In addition, this issue has received the least amount of attention/energy from the public. For this reason, the strategies recommended are for coordination and organization between the neighborhood associations, businesses and appropriate City/County Departments to address issues as they arise.

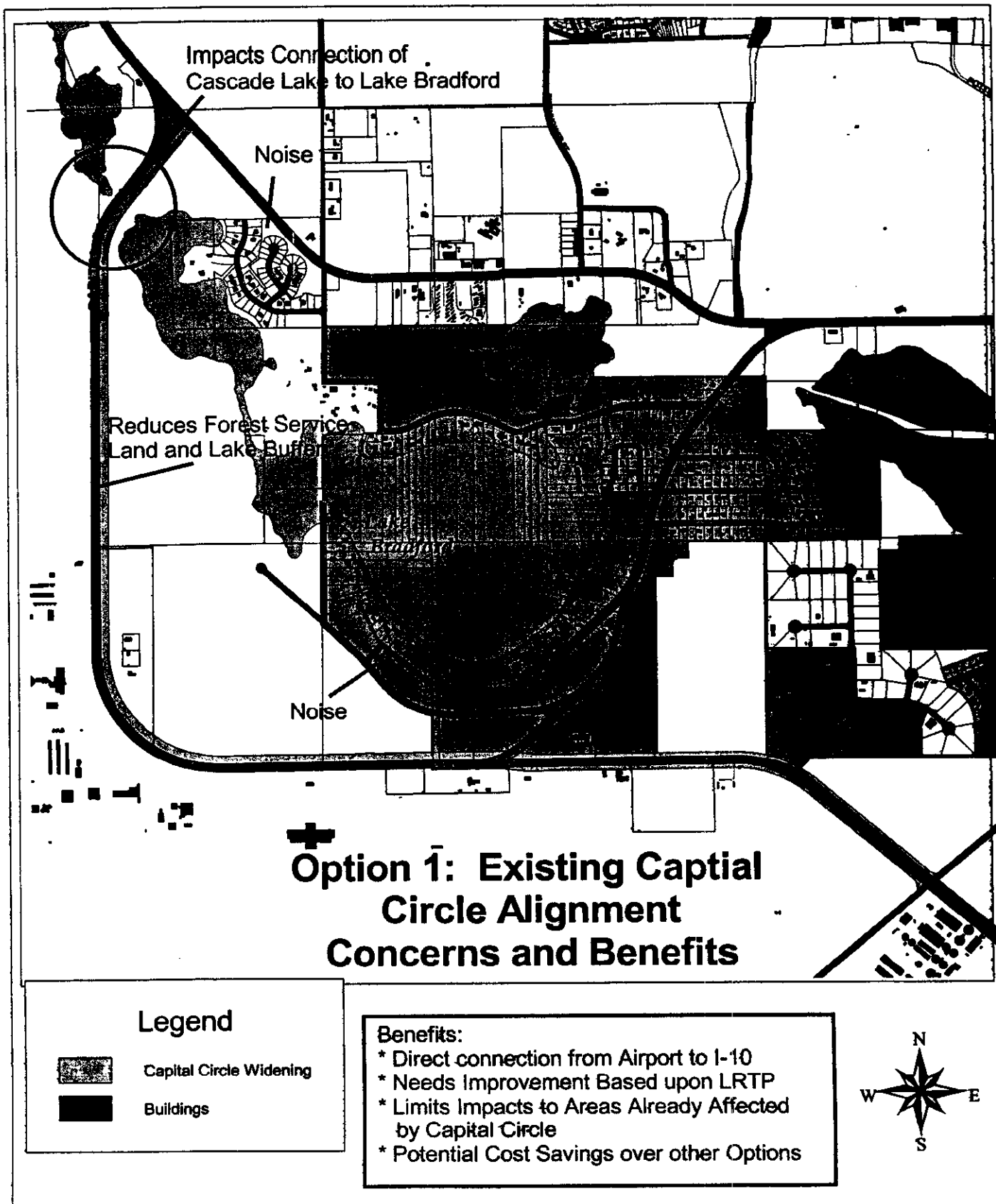
### Strategies

Encourage the establishment of neighborhood associations in the sector and coordination between the City/County as necessary.

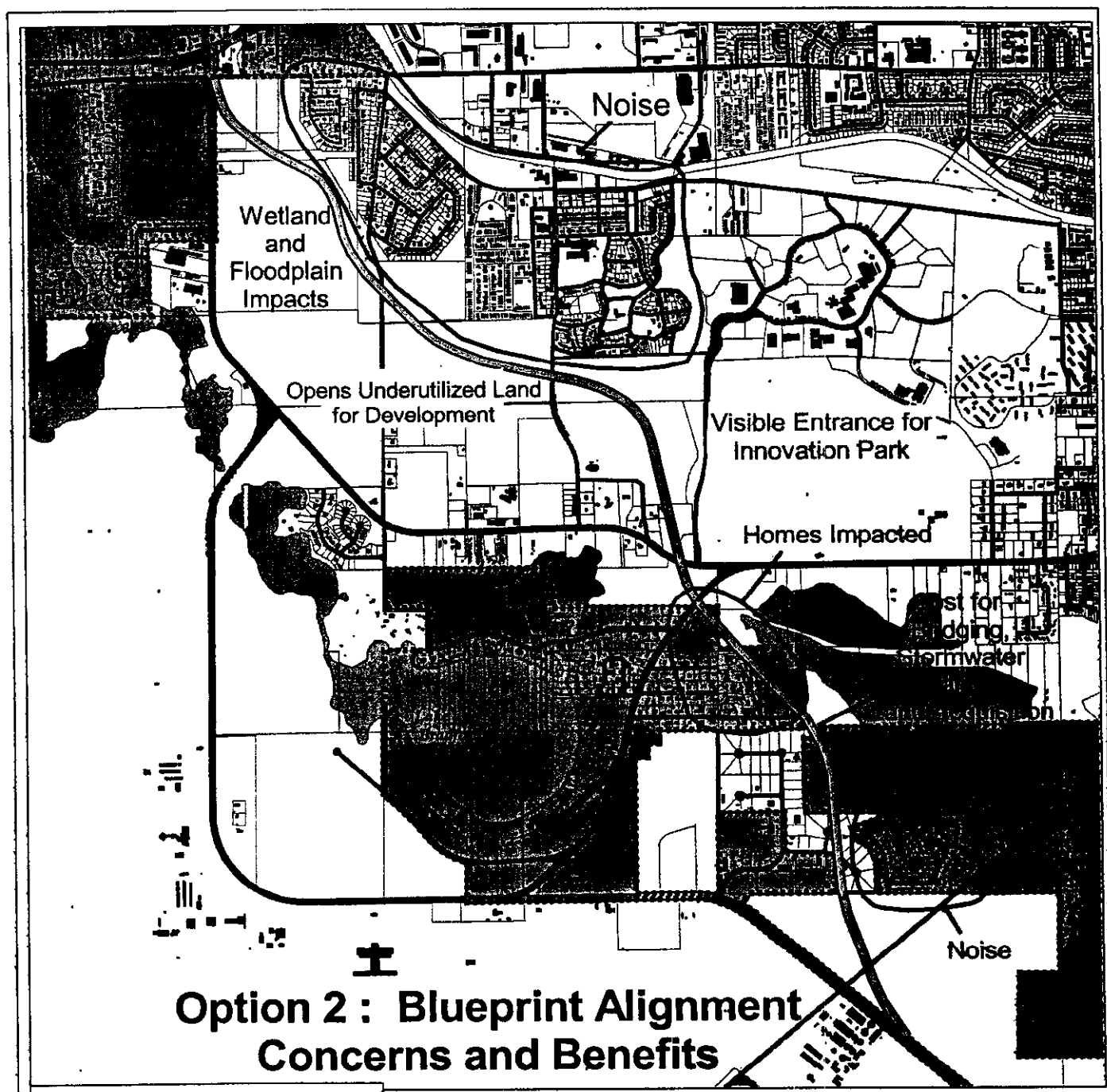
Facilitate communication between neighborhood associations and the respective departments to address safety issues including crime and code enforcement.











**Legend**

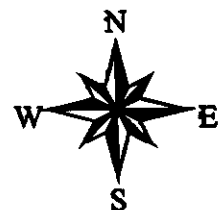


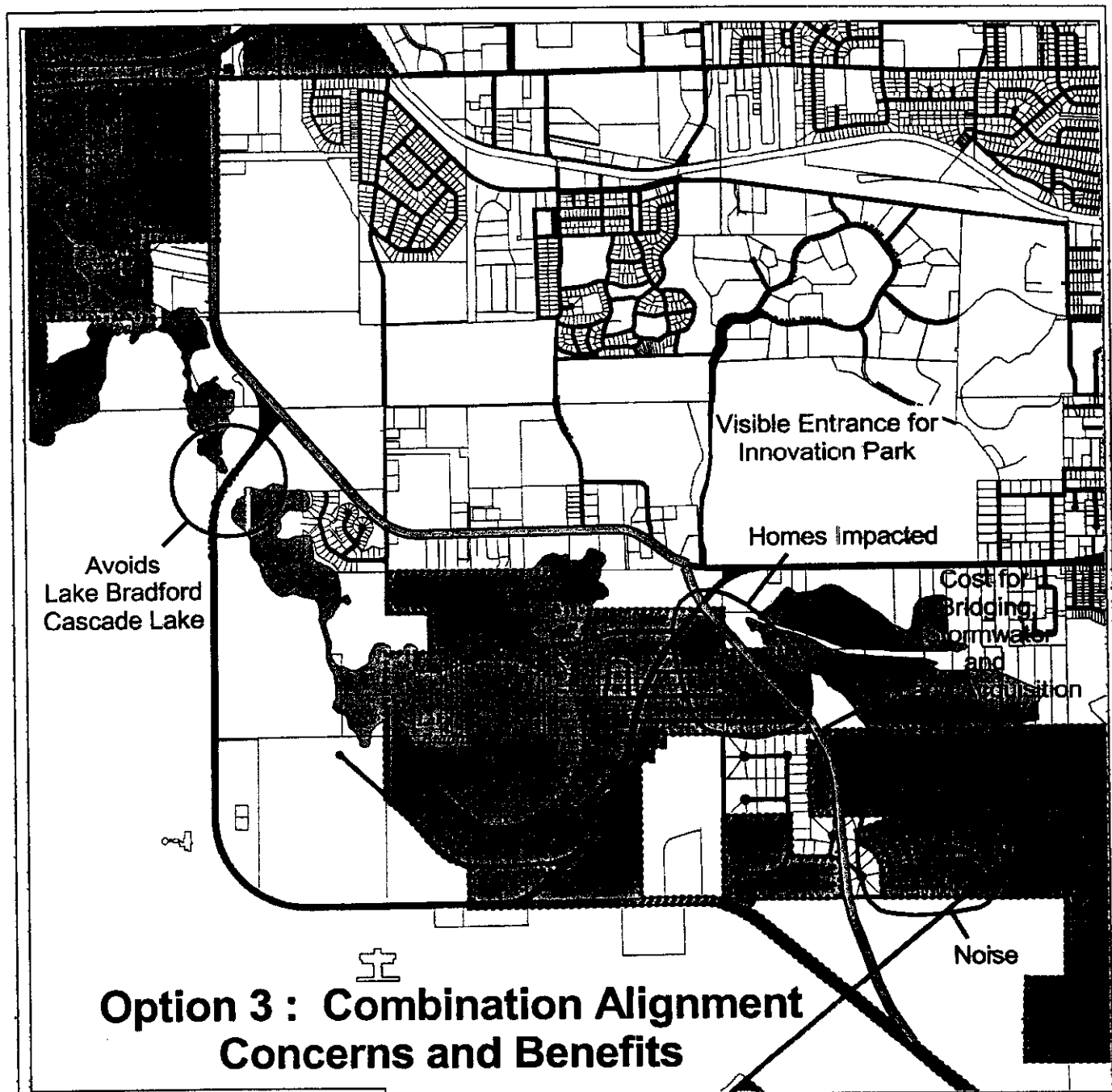
Proposed Capital Circle

Buildings

**Benefits :**



- \*Avoids Lake Bradford & Cascade Lake Connection
- \* Capital Circle SW could become Access Road for the Airport



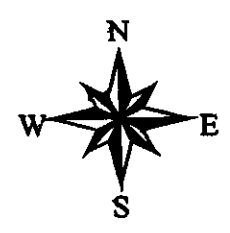


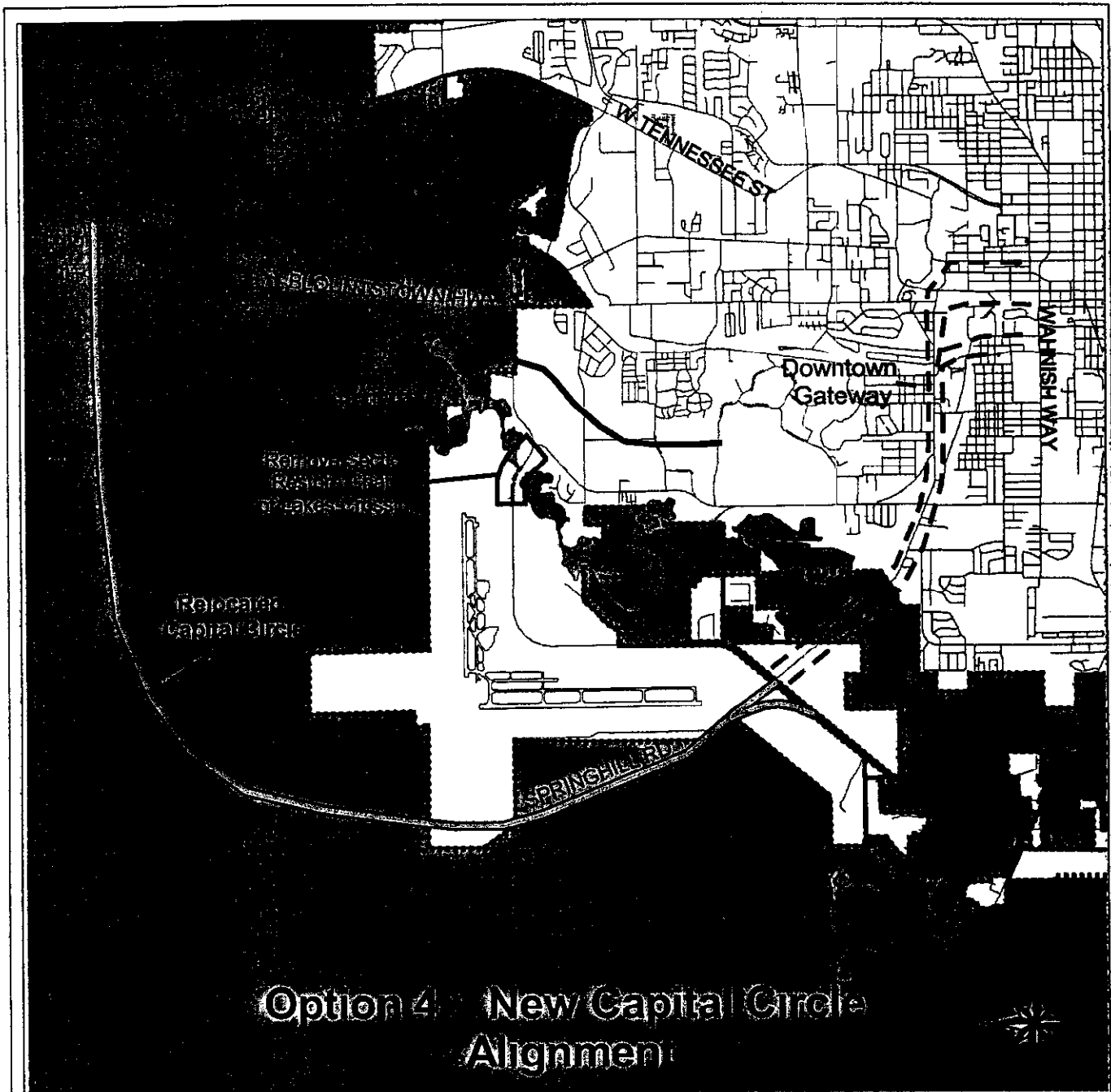
## Option 3 : Combination Alignment Concerns and Benefits

### Legend


-  Proposed Capital Circle
-  Buildings

- Benefits :
- \* Avoids Lake Bradford & Cascade Lake Connection
  - \* Capital Circle SW could become Access Road for the Airport
  - \* Minimizes Noise Impacts To Neighborhoods





**Legend**

 Proposed Capital Circle

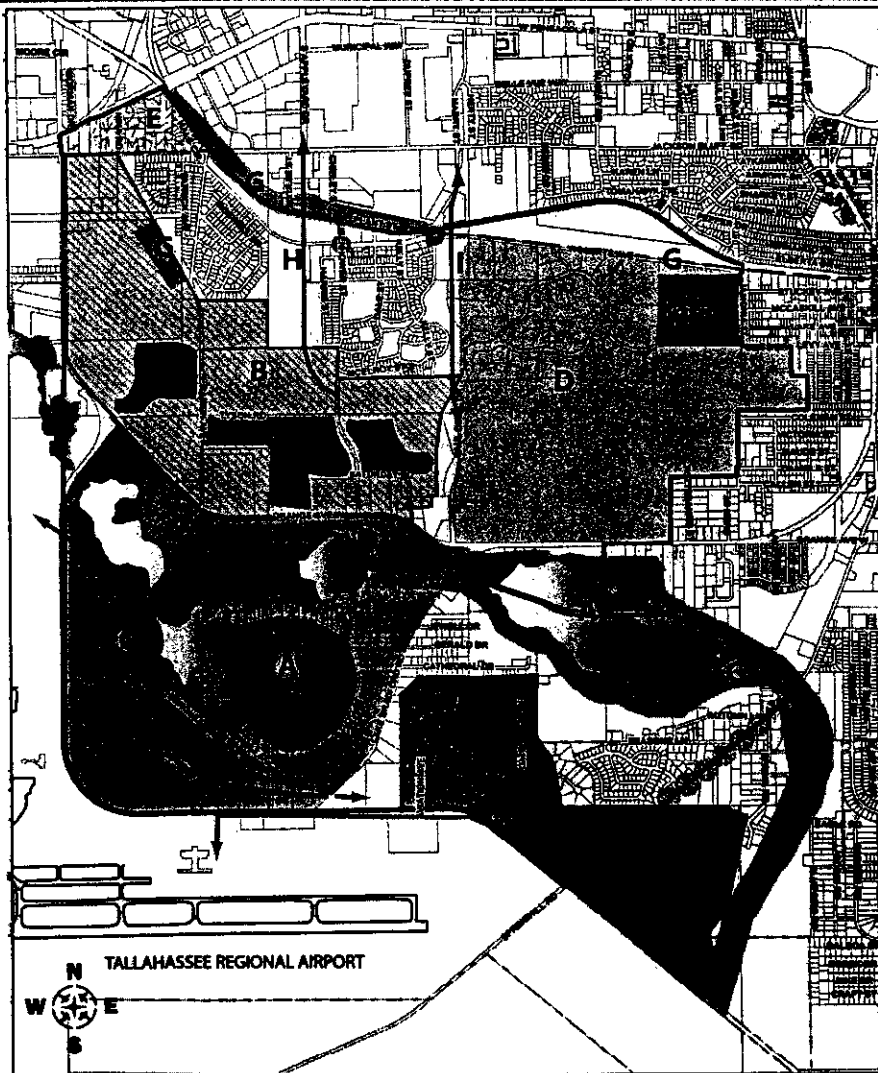
**Benefits :**

- \* New Limited Access Road Connecting 1-10 to Airport
- \* Reduced Right of Way Costs
- \* Connects to Springhill as Downtown Gateway

**Concerns:**

- \* Construction / ROW
- \* Environmental Impacts
- \* Connections to I-10
- \* Land Use Implications

# Citizen Recommended Improvements - Lake Bradford Sector



- A - CHAIN OF LAKES
- B - ORANGE AVE NORTH
- C - S.E. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
- D - FSU/INNOVATION PARK
- E - SECURITY ZONE
- F - SPRINGHILL ROAD GATEWAY
- G - PARKS & GREENWAYS
- H - I - ROAD CONNECTIONS NORTH-SOUTH ROAD OPTIONS

- GATEWAY-CORRIDOR
- RESTORATION AREA
- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS
- PROJECT BOUNDARY

Recommended Improvements from the First Workshop

## A. Lake Bradford and Chain of Lakes

- Retain protections for Lake Bradford including existing special development zones, low density residential housing and government ownership of property. (The existing special development zone is meant to protect the Chain of Lakes. This designation requires limited or low-density development and extensive natural buffers around the numerous aquatic features.)
- Support expansion of Tallahassee Museum of Science and Natural History
- Provide passive recreational trails and greenways consistent with the protection of Lake Bradford including the City's Golden Astor property.

## B. Orange Avenue North (Vacant Private, Government and University property)

- Restore properties used for dumping and mining
- Identify existence of environmentally sensitive areas
- Limit the use of these lands to activities that are adequately buffered from existing residential areas, do not create an inordinate increase of cut through traffic and do not degrade the quality of the chain of lakes.
- A central area providing a gathering place for the sector. The ideas ranged from community meeting space to neighborhood scale retail providing services currently lacking in the area. All agreed that this area should be compatible with the adjacent resources and existing neighborhoods.
- No consensus for use of these lands. Ideas ranged from housing, university/research uses or park lands. Multifamily housing limited to married student housing similar to Alumni Village.

## C. Southeast Business Development

- Area deemed appropriate for heavier commercial development, likely containing uses linked to the Tallahassee Regional Airport. Additionally, this location utilizes transportation connections to I-10 via Capital Circle SW and downtown via Springhill Road.

## D. Innovation Park and Florida State University

- Area cited as a potential location for family-student housing or executive housing for the university and businesses. Increased affordable housing will serve both institutions and the sector as a whole.
- Consider redesign of golf course to provide executive style housing along golf course

## E. Security

- Areas recommended for security improvement to address criminal issues through increased patrols, better lighting and landscaping.

## F. Springhill Rd. Corridor

- Improve the infrastructure and streetscape of Springhill Road establishing it as a gateway corridor to the city and improving the Civic image for visitors arriving at the Airport destined for the Universities or Downtown. Also, improvements may reduce impacts to Lake Bradford Road and Orange Avenue.

## G. Parks and Greenways

- Neighborhood parks to provide recreational opportunities beyond organized athletics. In addition, greenways and trails promoting mobility for alternative modes of transport linking the area with the County-wide system.

## H-I North South Road Options

- Create a new north-south roadway in the sector providing improved access to Innovation Park, Orange Avenue and vacant government owned lands. The roadway will also provide a reliever for the traffic cutting through existing residential neighborhoods.

## J. Intersection/Highway Improvements

- Intersection improvements identified including sidewalk improvements and existing safety hazards due to the railroad tracks